



PROTECTING YOUR  
RIGHT TO ROAM

May 6th, 2021

Portland City Council

### **Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA)**

Oregon Walks is the state's pedestrian advocacy organization and we work to ensure that walking is safe, convenient and accessible for everyone. We are writing in support of DOZA and urge City Council to approve it, with a few changes to further support development of affordable housing.

Increasing density in higher-density mixed-use neighborhoods will help make walking a good transportation option for more of Portland's residents. This is especially important in the face of global climate change and continued traffic violence on our streets. Therefore, we support the changes in the design review process that will make it easier for developers to build taller, denser buildings in the area covered by the zoning overlay. Specifically, we support allowing taller buildings to choose the Design Standards process, and prohibiting the Design Commission from reducing the size of buildings. We do not support allowing specific neighborhoods to reduce the amount of housing that could be built by instituting restrictive guidelines in terms of massing/height/FAR, either via Main Street guidelines or Character Statements.

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of the Design Guidelines when it comes to pedestrian issues. This isn't only true of Guideline 4, which directly addresses the sidewalk level of buildings, but extends to other guidelines as well, such as Guideline 5 requiring opportunities to pause, sit, and interact, and to Guideline 6, which goes down to the level of integrating vaults into the paving design, a small detail that makes conditions safer and more attractive for pedestrians.

Finally, we urge City Council to consider the amendments Portland: Neighbors Welcome. Lower-income Portlanders, who are more likely to rely on walking for transportation, are increasingly being pushed out to areas that are dangerous for pedestrians. Allowing for more affordable housing in pedestrian-friendly mixed-use areas is an important equity issue that the City should promote.

Sincerely,

Claire Vlach

Oregon Walks Plans & Projects Committee